MARVEL
ULTIMATE UNIVERSE
1
ONE YEAR IN
CAMP | SCHARF | IACONO
CONDON | CAPPUCCIO | VALENZA
DEC. 2024 | RATED T+

THE WORLD

FORMER NORTH AMERICAN UNION
REDISTRIBUTED TO EUROPEAN COALITION,
SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA & CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
THE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA
EMMANUEL DA COSTA & THE HELLFIRE CLUB
THE EUROPEAN COALITION
CAPTAIN BRITAIN
THE CITY
THE MAKER
THE EURASIAN REPUBLIC
MAGIK, COLOSSUS & OMEGA RED
HI NO KUNI ("LAND OF THE SUN")
SUNFIRE, VIPER & SILVER SAMURAI
THE CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
THE HULK
THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS
RA & KHONSHU
SEATS OF POWER
LESSER TERRITORIES

THE WORLD

AS REMADE BY THE MAKER'S COUNCIL

- ~~THE NORTH AMERICAN UNION~~ REDISTRIBUTED
- ~~REGIONAL SUBSIDIARIES~~ REDISTRIBUTED

- THE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA
- REGIONAL CLUBS
- FRACTIONAL CULTURES

- THE EUROPEAN COALITION
- REGIONAL GOVERNORS
- FIEFDOMS

- THE CITY
- LATVERIAN TERRITORIES

- THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS
- REGIONAL DYNASTIES
- LOCAL TEMPLES

- THE EURASIAN REPUBLIC
- REGIONAL DIRECTORS
- LOCAL SCHOOLS

- THE CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
- THE SHADOWS OF THE IMMORTAL HAND

- HI NO KUNI ("LAND OF THE SUN")
- DAIMYOS

- WAKANDA

1963-2024

This man is a terrorist. Can you tell?
Who's ready for a burger?
Look carefully: His name is Keith Kincaid. He is 41 years old.
I am!
It never used to hit 90 degrees in December...
Ignore the wife and kids. Look past the spotless record--never convicted of a crime, never arrested, never so much as a parking ticket or litter citation.
Throw away the sworn affidavits (filled out in triplicate) from friends and neighbors attesting to changed tires, shoveled walkways, cats saved from trees.
Try not to think about it, honey.
I've got medium and medium well.
The Christmas Eves in soup kitchens, the charitable giving, the summers building houses for the poor--ignore all of it.
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
Because last Tuesday, after one too many, Keith turned to someone he shouldn't have and said:
RUMMMBLLEEE
"Do you ever wonder if these Ultimates people might have a point?"
Huh. The forecast didn't say anything about--
Keith Kincaid is a terrorist.

ZZZRRTTT
Dad!!!
Keith!
Daddy!
SSSSSSSSS
And we do not tolerate terrorists.
Direct hit, sir. Target is medium well.
Nice work, agent. You throw a mean lightning bolt.

Ahh, the targeting system does most of the work. But thank you, sir.
"We" are H.A.N.D., Heroic Anomaly Neutralization Directorate.
This is the Beast, flagship "Cumulo-Carrier" of the H.A.N.D. Heli-fleet. From here H.A.N.D. predicts, and preemptively eliminates, threats to global order.
The Beast is powered by a thermonuclear core and equipped with some of the most sophisticated surveillance technology on the planet.
Disguised as a permanent, mile-wide thunderstorm, we can microtarget budding terrorists like Keith in Tallahassee while listening to high schoolers accidentally implicate their parents in Pittsburgh.
In other words, we can do pretty much whatever we want.

H.A.N.D. agents are now crawling like shadows across every inch of Keith Kincaid's home and office, looking for terrorist links-- a *Super-Suit*, a *holographic message*, a StarkTech *catalyst container box*.
What has Inspection turned up?
They won't find anything. There's nothing *to* find.
Nothing so far. But the *Evidence Factory* is already on it.
Excellent. Make sure the boys in *Narrative* come up with something too.
Yes, sir.
None of that artsy crap either. Something with *broad appeal*.
Yes, sir.
But today we have an *audience*. So I've got to make it look *good*.
Another day making the world safe.
My name is Nick Fury, Director of H.A.N.D. And this is my *last confession*.

Of course, the kind of people I work with, I can't actually write it down. Can't take the chance someone might find it *early*.
Sir? They're here.
All right. I'm on my way.
So I'm writing it *in my head*.
Even *that's* no guarantee. Hell, psychic interrogation is *page 43* of the H.A.N.D. training manual.
But I *wrote* the manual.
MAKE THE MAKER PROUD.
If I *fail*, I imagine it'll be easy to pluck it out of whatever's left of my *head*. And if I *succeed*...
Well, if you're "reading" this, whoever you are, you've got me at a rare disadvantage--*you know how it all turns out*.
00:36:48

I bet you have questions. I bet number one with a bullet is: Why'd he do it?
Ladies and gentlemen.
Lately I've been asking myself the same thing.
I've had a bullet in my brain since 1944. Used to say I survived, but my conscience didn't make it.
Thank you for your patience.
Up until a year ago, I answered directly to the Maker. In his absence, I answer to the Council.
For those of you "reading" who might not know:

The one with the thick French accent is Captain Britain, Henri Duggary. Ruler of Europe and the East Coast of North America, King of Avalon, and all around [redacted].
Tell me something, Fury. How is it, exactement, that a man like you... can keep men like us waiting?
Born aristocrat, obsessed with blood. The most punchable face I've ever seen, but you'd only break your hand.
Speaking of blood, there's Emmanuel Da Costa, leader of the Society of South America and the Black King of the Hellfire Club.
Stop whining, Duggary. In the seven minutes we've been waiting, I made two billion dollars.
Little known fact: Da Costa receives regular transfusions to keep him feeling young and vital. The sickly looking kid attached to him via IV is his own son.
The boy has a genetic mutation that gives him power over fire and light. A dying sun. Heh.
Your time cannot be wasted without your consent. You have only yourself to blame.
No wonder you are troubled by two old men and a laptop...
The transfusions give Da Costa temporary super-attributes. His son is just one of many blood boys...
The Rasputins are infamous, of course. The new Tsars of Eurasia and Limbo, and direct descendents of the actual Rasputin. They inherited his famous sense of humor.
We are not here for making money. We are here for making graves.
They rule with an iron fist, literally.
The Rasputins never smile, and speak only when they have to.

Emperor Sunfire doesn't speak at all. He has Viper, "the Voice of the Rising Sun," for that.
His Heavenly Sovereign has urgent matters at home. Our efforts with the Children of the Atom are at a critical juncture. It is His wish that this meeting be completed with all possible haste.
Sunfire is Emperor of Hi No Kuni, He-Who-Sits the Chrysanthemum Throne.
Ra and Khonshu. The Lords of the Upper and Lower Kingdoms. The chosen representatives of the Egyptian gods on Earth. They rule all of Africa.
Well, almost all.
The world struggles in its yolk.
On its body are festering sores and vermin.
In the morning, they rise up like leeks.
In the evening, they sink down and die.
The gods follow a different order of logic and are mysteries even to me.
Finally, the gray monster with the serene face is Bruce Banner, the Incredible Enlightened Hulk. Him I bet you've heard of.
Rules most of Asia and the West Coast of North America. Absolute monarch of the Seven Celestial Cities of Heaven. Spiritual leader to billions.
You have our attention, Fury. Report.
The Hulk is the strongest thing on Earth, and the most dangerous.
They are the Council. They rule the world.
Glad you could all make it. I've been meaning to get you all together for a while.
At least for now.

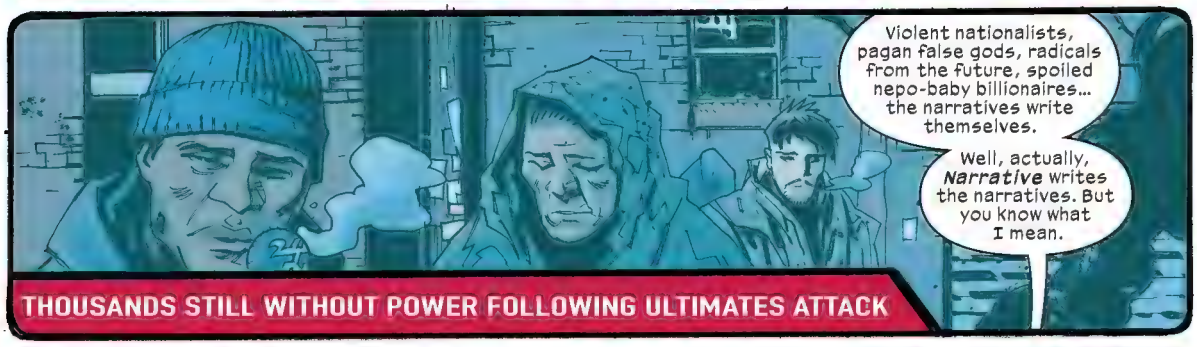
They're monsters, but my hands have as much blood on them as theirs.
--have been monitoring the Ultimates situation since--
These are my kinds of people now. This is my kind of party.
It wasn't always...
Those early days were different...
...kicking in the teeth of Nazi vampires...sabotaging super-weapons with Dum Dum and the Howlers...
Good and evil. Black and white.
Things seemed much clearer then.
Cleaner.

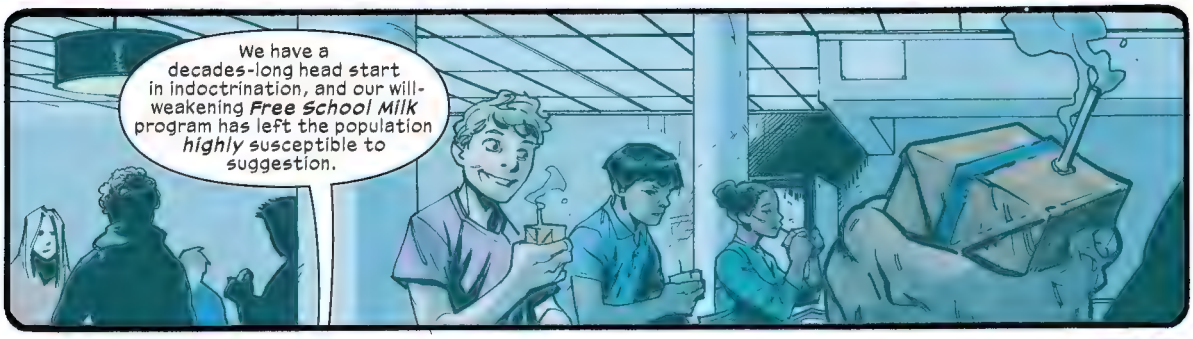
Then... things get... blurry...
And...
And...
Fury.
Fury!

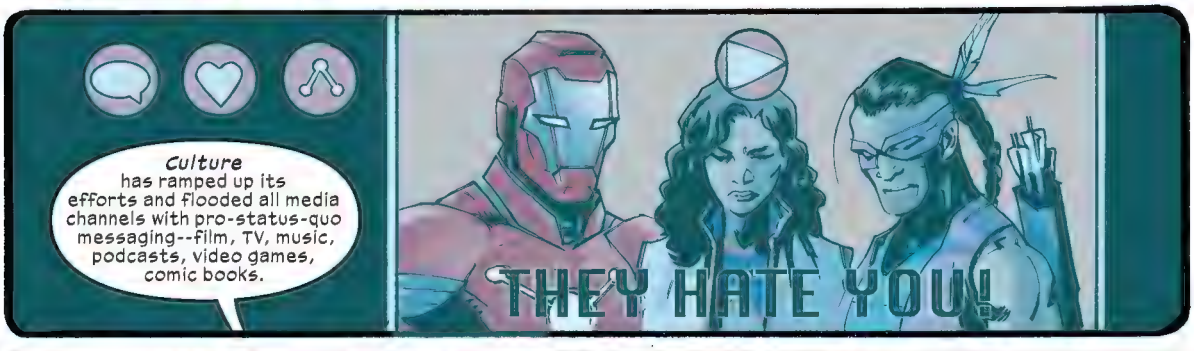
Enough tiresome backstory! We already *know* all of this.
Give us something *new.*
Well, following Doctor Banner's failure in K'un-Lun--*
*See *Ultimates #6.*
I *killed* the Stark boy. I'm *certain* of it. I felt him die in my hands.
CRUNCH
"*Maybe.* He hasn't been seen since. But the others are still operating.
"Three weeks ago, the one from the White House--calling herself 'Miss America Chavez'--intervened to protect a group of pro-democracy protestors in *Guatemala City.*

"One week ago, another Damage Control facility was raided and burned to the ground by a 'flying man on fire.' What was lost is still unclear.
"And just yesterday, a shipment of weapons meant for the war in Wakanda was destroyed. By *exploding arrows.*"
The Ultimates Terrorist Network is *still active.* They are now less high profile, less ambitious, and more careful.
"Incredible" work, Banner.
Careful, Fury. I have... recently rediscovered an appreciation for *mindless violence.*
I'm not afraid of death anymore.
What scares me *now* is dying without some kind of *redemption.*
So I'm playing along.
There *is* good news.

We are *handily* winning the information war. The terrorist framing has almost *total* penetration.
It's a classic for a reason.
ULTIMATES PUT THEIR FOOT DOWN


Violent nationalists, pagan false gods, radicals from the future, spoiled nepo-baby billionaires... the narratives write themselves.
Well, actually, *Narrative* writes the narratives. But you know what I mean.
THOUSANDS STILL WITHOUT POWER FOLLOWING ULTIMATES ATTACK


We have a decades-long head start in indoctrination, and our will-weakening *Free School Milk* program has left the population *highly* susceptible to suggestion.


Culture has ramped up its efforts and flooded all media channels with pro-status-quo messaging--film, TV, music, podcasts, video games, comic books.
THEY HATE YOU!

It can be hard to tell the difference between following orders and playing along.
Comic books? That's a waste of resources, isn't it? Does anyone still *read* those?

You'd be surprised...
The point is, it's *working.* Even among those prone to support the Ultimates' agenda, we've created a zone of "strategic uncertainty."
Sure, we massaged the numbers, inflated *casualties* and *costs*... but we couldn't have done it without *them.* The public hates a death toll. That's why ours is *strictly classified.*
Sometimes I can't stand myself.

But, bright side. Soon I won't have to
00:12:41
Information war?
And what of war-war?
Our way when we have such a problem is to come to them in their home, when they sit on toilet, or sleeping with wife. We kill family--children, grandmother, doesn't matter--so that they can see...
...and drag them through street in dripping chains, so that everyone can see. And then...no more problem.
So where is home?
We're working on it. Their technology is decades ahead of anything found outside of the City.
"We've recovered one of the stealth-suits with only minor damage. But the boys in Extechop say it could take years to fully crack."
Besides Tony Stark, the identities of the Ultimates are closely kept secrets. They could be anyone.

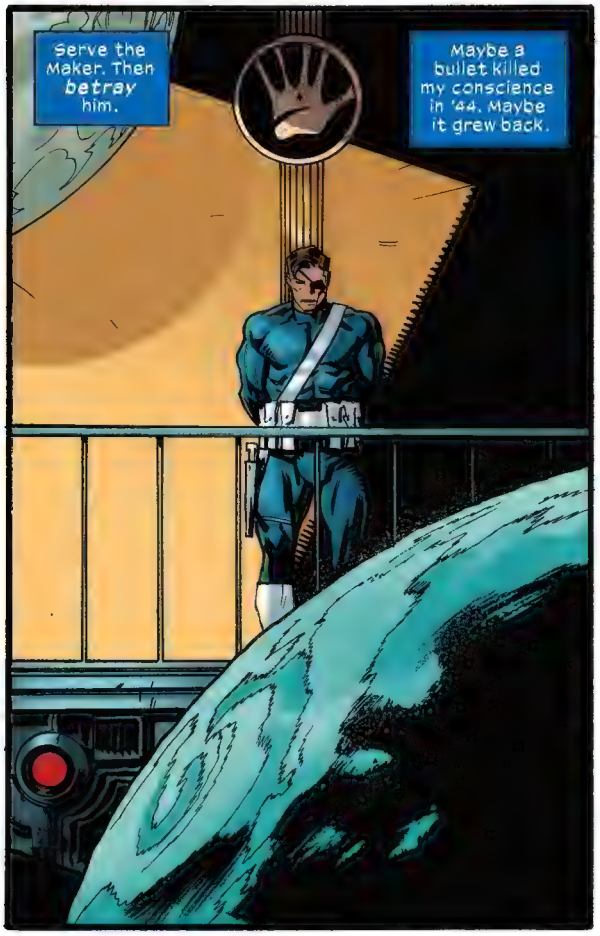
So you have nothing. I owe you an apology, Henri. It is possible to waste time against one's will.
This meeting is ended. Next time, a virtual conference will suffice.
Yes. Some of us have continents to run.
The Eurasian Republic does not need your aid. Our Sentinel and Winter Soldier programs will hunt down and kill any threat to our rule.
Wait. There's more.
We have seen enough, Fury.
"Trust me.
"You're not going to want to miss the big finish."
I am underwhelmed, Fury.
Go ahead, agents.

ZZIIIPPP
These are our men in *Wakanda, Hi No Kuni* and *New York*. Embedded with what we believe are likely *future recruits* of the Ultimates.
MAKE THE MAKER PROUD
"We have dozens just like them...
"...all over the world...
"...equipped with airtight *artificial identities*...
"...and *pseudo-psychologies*."
They can be anyone? Well, so can *we*.
Agents operating in *our* territories without our permission or knowledge? *Outrageous!* An *affront!*
You forget yourself, Fury!
You work for us!
No. We all work for the same person.
Don't we?

In addition to our deep-cover network, we've made serious progress in turning someone already inside the organization.
A traitor in the Ultimates? Who?
The fewer people who know, the better. For security--
Are you implying that we are security risks? That the Ultimates... have spies in our organizations?
Like I said: They could be anyone.
If you've ever wondered how a group of power-hungry [redacted] like this could work together, the answer is: They don't. Not really.
My people are dedicated to me--body, mind and spirit.
Though it would explain certain things--how else could they have escaped you in K'un-Lun?
But the Maker kept them in line. And the Maker's design kept them in balance.
I seem to recall them escaping Duggary...and your man in the White House...
I was surprised by the giant--
With Stark and Stane gone, North America carved up, and the Maker locked in the City for another year (which for him is more like ten thousand)...
...the entire system is beginning to break down. I'm just gonna hurry things up a little.
Perhaps we should revisit the partition of North America...you seem stretched beyond your capacities...
--maker of heaven and earth, I am the establisher of the mountains, the creator of the waters and two secret horizons. I am the light and I am darkness, I made the hours and the--

But we're getting to the end here, and I still haven't answered your question. Whoever you are.

Why'd I do it?


Serve the Maker. Then betray him.
Maybe a bullet killed my conscience in '44. Maybe it grew back.

Whatever I did, I believed I was doing for the greater good.

For the greater good, I enabled the inhuman genocide and subsequent diaspora.
For the greater good, I killed a family of Star Children meant to usher in a bright new human age.
For the greater good, I permanently crippled promising young scientists with potentially destabilizing ideas.
Are we *boring* you, Fury?
I gave my *life* to the greater good.
Which would make me a dead man, *huh?*
Always. But now you've got my full attention.
Initiate self-destruct sequence. Fury Override Code *29448284H-Slash-D.*

Self-destruct initiated.
One thing I've learned after sixty years of killing so-called "super heroes" is--
Fury? What...?
--they don't stay down.
C'mon. Don't tell me you weren't half expecting it.
You can put bullets in their ten-lobed brains and bury their indestructible bodies under *parking lots*...
Don't look to the agents for help. Poor bastards, they're ***soul-bonded.*** Loyal to ***death.***
You can suffocate the super-women in poison gas and run the semi-divine boys through with 100,000 volts until their perfect hearts finally give up...
In a few seconds, this entire Helicarrier goes up in a roman candle big as 10,000 Hiroshimas.
It might even kill ***you,*** Banner. We'll find out in...
Fifteen seconds to self-destruct.
...you can make them do things they never thought they could, ***horrible*** things...
I just had to make sure we were far enough away from anywhere inhabited.
I've got enough blood on my hands without adding half of ***Florida.***
...but however many you co-opt or put ***down,*** more will rise ***up.***

They're out there. More every day.
Fury...
Five seconds to self-destruct.
Shut your mouth.
They can be anyone.
Four...
If I succeeded and you're reading this--
I figure they've got a chance now. With you out of the way--with us out of the way--they've got a chance.
--decanted, I guess, from the astral plane, or wherever the mind goes when the brain becomes vapor--
Three...
--then know that I'm sorry.
That's gotta count for something, right?
Two...
I want you to know--I always hated all of you.
One...
See you all in Hell.
And that I know this is not enough.
Huh?

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
His face! The look on his face! It gets me every time.
I suppose it's that time again. They barely last a year now.
What was it last time? An exploding island?
No, last time was the hyper-plague infected handshake. The exploding island was two attempts ago.
Did you compose a "confession" this time, Nicholas? I particularly enjoy those. "My name is Nick Fury. And this is my last confession."
I like the bit about the bullet in his brain, the conscience growing back.
Yes, very poetic.
BANG
Tsk, tsk, tsk. Impotent old man.
TING
You know, Nicholas, I'm not really one for reality television, but I could watch you struggle all day. In fact, I sometimes do. I hold viewing parties.
Your pain is a big hit with the bored billionaire demographic.

Emmanuel. Would you do the honors?
It would be my pleasure.
What's--? I--I don't *understand*--
Oh, but that's *part* of it. That you die never *fully* understanding-- *that's part of it!*
Men like you don't get *redemption,* Fury. Men like you get *replaced.*
Oh god!
Oh god, I'm ssssss...

SSSSSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSS

One of you clean this up. And download the new memories into the data bank.
Yes, sir.
I shouldn't be *seeing* this, I shouldn't be--
Quiet, Roberto. Britain and I will finish up here.
Very good. Here's to the next Director of H.A.N.D. having better luck with the Ultimates.
It will be good to have a...*fresh perspective* on the problem.
Well...
...you can hardly call it *fresh*...
And if I *failed*...

I'll never understand why the Maker continues to allow this. We demand *obēissance absolue* from all--
...if I died for nothing and the Council *lives*...
For one, a *spy* isn't a *soldier* or a citizen. A spy who won't *betray* you isn't much of a *spy*.
...if you're a part of the vast and dehumanizing machine we call the *greater good*...
Additionally, these expected betrayals have the potential to flush out *unexpected* ones. Traitors tend to find one another.
...then I am *also* sorry.
Because your life is as *pointless* and *pathetic* as mine was. But *you're* still there.
But to tell you the truth...
...most of all...
I may be *dead*...

...but at least I'm *free*.
...I think the whole thing just makes him *smile*.
TO BE CONTINUED...ACROSS THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSE IN 2025!

From the private dictation logs of Dr. Alonya Prostovich, director of science and technology for the Eurasian Republic.
The task was handed down to us from the Maker himself.
The Eurasian Republic was to be centralized home to mutantkind, though its primary motive was *control*. And who better to control mutant problem than mutants themselves?
What the Maker did not know, however, was what Eurasian Republic chose to do with those mutants. It was not to provide them with sanctuary, nor was it to imprison them.
Despite their genetic similarities, they were not viewed as brother and sister but as *tools*. Their unique abilities made them, shall we say...*useful*.
VRRP-VRRRRT
Although there was peace between territories as established under the Maker's watchful eye, our leaders grew fearful of incursions, insurrections and reactionary reprisals.
Thus was created "Directorate X." We worked in secret, a ghost operation. No paper trail, known to less than dozen individuals. We were *bureaucratic phantoms*.
To world at large, I was director of science and technology under Eurasian Republic. To my superiors, I was asset. To my subjects, I was *god*.

Strength inevitably breeds resistance. Led by coalition of humans and mutants, the *Opposition* rose. They fought Eurasian forces time and again...
TERRORISTS STRIKE MOSCOW. KILL EIGHT
...only to deliver us unexpected *victory.* One that had evaded us and the Maker alike. We called it, as we did the others, simply-- *specimen.*
When the specimen arrived in our compound, it was already regenerating from its grievous wounds in battle. We went to work immediately.
Four surgeons died trying to administer sedative. It took Omega-level telepath to control it. And at that? *Barely.*
We had encountered mutants akin to specimen before. Attempts were made for similar enhancement but did not take. I was convinced this time it would work.
This wasn't question of whether we could turn average citizen into warrior. No, this was whether we could make good soldier *perfect.*

And we did.
We turned a man into a weapon.
SNIKT
Born and died, then born again.
They called him Logan once. Then the "specimen." No more...
...now he is ours. Our Winter Soldier.

TO BE CONTINUED IN ULTIMATE WOLVERINE #1!